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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 002322

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,
B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION - CANDIDATES, REFORM, AND CORRUPTION

Block Quotes

Friday, June 16, 2006

-- Walid Abdullah Al-Ghanim inquired in progressive Arabic daily Al-Qabas under the title "How Do They Choose Their Candidate?" (6/16): "Some people choose their candidate for unsound reasons, even if the candidate is unqualified to hold a parliamentary position. Some choose their candidate because they belong to the same family or tribe, even if he is not worthy of running for office. Some choose their candidate in return for what presents, monies, or bribes they are given. The latter are the most awful type of voters."

-- Fatima Othman Al-Bakr penned in progressive Arabic daily Al-Qabas under the title "Stars and Moons in Kuwait's Skies" (6/16): "The first time is the hardest and 'the voyage of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' For those observing this democratic experiment, their belief and hope increase that they are in good hands. These nights are beautiful as the skies are clear and the stars and moon shine. This is not a midsummer night's dream, it is a reality that is felt and embodied in reality that bolsters our pride in the Kuwaiti woman's role and her entrance into the political fray.... Congratulations to Kuwait on its democratic wedding which will be recorded in Kuwait's history with letters of light."

-- Salah Al-Fadly editorialized in moderate Arabic daily Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "Do Not Let Us down, Youth" (6/16): "With all due respect to our devoted political leadership that seeks reform, realistically it is the youth who lead these demands. The thrust provided by the youth has made them leaders and the leadership followers. Thanks to their vitality, they have given a new soul to the political reality as a whole, and more specifically to the elections. We must warn them against apathy and laziness. We hope they do not let us down at this sharp turn on our democratic path in Kuwait. Our only hope for reform hinges on them after exhausting all other means. They must not quit with the end of the elections as the elections are only the beginning and the road is long ahead of us."

-- Dr. Saoud Mishal Al-Shimmery inquired in moderate Arabic daily Al-Watan under the title "Why Don't We Start off Right?" (6/16): "The government should present its opinion on reform, if it has one and its outlook for the future as long as it takes a path of justice and equality. Or, it should listen to others' opinions on reducing the number of districts, and the numbers of candidates in relation to the number of citizens in an area, so that the people may state

their opinion as is done in advanced democratic countries. The Kuwaiti people will respect the opinion of the majority if it decides to have one district, five, or ten.... Let us start off right, in a new era, and a new day."

-- Ali Fahd Al-Ajmi observed in moderate Arabic daily Al-Watan under the title "Finally, the Dissolved Leadership Agrees with the Opposition" (6/16): "It caught my attention when the former chairman of the National Council Jassim Al-Khorafi...warned the ruling family members against playing with fire as the country cannot tolerate it, that they will burn the dry and the green, and that their differences will reflect on the people. I hoped that he would mention them by name so the truth can become clear and the people would know the honesty of his intentions. I do not know whether he meant the ruling family members who are currently in government or those who are not. I wish the leadership would have said those words under the dome of the Parliament when some opposition MPs were combating the same phenomenon mentioned by the former chairman."

-- Member of the Kuwaiti Engineers Society Salman Mikki Al-Qalaf stated in pro-government Arabic daily Al-Seyassah under the title "We Will Reveal the Corrupt, But...?" (6/16): "We are tired of candidates and former MPs and their empty slogans about how they will reveal the corrupt. They do not have the courage to reveal any truth or the names of the corrupt.... It is true that there is corruption in some government agencies and as there is corruption, there must be corrupt individuals. Revealing their names at electoral seminars is courage and honesty from the candidate to the voter. To speak in slogans is meant to fool the people and tickle their emotions for the sake of the parliamentary chair."

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